

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG PROGRAMS

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**NEWS RELEASE****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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STATE TACKLES PROBLEM GAMBLING

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger proclaims March 1-7, 2009 as California Problem Gambling Awareness Week.

SACRAMENTO – Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has proclaimed March 1-7 California Problem Gambling Awareness Week to educate the public about the damage caused by problem and pathological gambling and to raise awareness of the help that is available.

“Problem gambling can take many forms and is often defined as creating a negative impact on a person, their family, workplace or community,” said Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. “Approximately 3.7 percent of California’s adult population experiences trouble with gambling, so it is vital that we raise awareness about the warning signs and where to turn for help.”

Last year, Governor Schwarzenegger provided \$5 million from the Indian Gaming Special Distribution Fund to serve individuals whose lives are affected by problem gambling. This year, the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs Office of Problem Gambling is launching new treatment programs developed by specialists in problem gambling.

In conjunction with treatment programs, the Office of Problem Gambling continues to offer prevention programs including a toll-free helpline, public awareness campaigns, training and research.

“Treatment for problem gambling is a relatively new science in California, but it is a priority for the state because it can easily destroy lives,” said Renée Zito, Director of the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs. “We are excited to see the planning and preparation that went into this program over the past year come to fruition and start helping people.”

The program is also offering a self-help workbook developed by UCLA’s Gambling Studies Program to help individuals understand gambling behavior and determine whether they have a problem. The workbook, in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese, is available online at [://www.problemgambling.ca](http://www.problemgambling.ca).

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Several state and private agencies have joined together to promote Problem Gambling Awareness Week with activities such as adult and youth outreach, public service announcements and distribution of posters and informational buttons. Agencies include the California Horse Racing Board, California Gambling Control Commission, Department of Justice's Bureau of Gambling Control, Department of Mental Health, California State Lottery, California Council on Problem Gambling, California Gaming Association (CGA), California Nations Indian Gaming Association (CNIGA) and the Office of Problem Gambling (OPG). Beginning in March, a Public Service Announcement produced by the California State Lottery, will air to further promote problem gambling awareness week.

The Governor's proclamation of Problem Gambling Awareness Week is available at <http://gov.ca.gov/proclamation/11546/>.

The Office of Problem Gambling is responsible for developing prevention and treatment programs to reduce the prevalence of problem and pathological gambling among California residents. For help with problem gambling call 1-800-GAMBLER (1-800-426-2537) or visit <http://www.problemgambling.ca> to access the Freedom from Problem Gambling self-help workbook or view the responsible gambling guidelines.

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